

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 AID-05 IO-14 /092 W

-----180436Z 118048 /14

R 171730Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 993

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINO 2949

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM,MDR

SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMENT FROM LISTIN DIARIO

1. ANOTHER ARTICULATE EDITORIAL ON HUMAN RIGHTS APPEARED IN PRESTIGIOUS LISTIN DIARIO JUNE 15. TRANSLATION FOLLOWS: QUOTE: IN OUR COUNTRY THE EXISTENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, DESPITE EXPLOSIONS OF VIOLENCE AND EXCESSES OF POWER, HAS BEEN FUNDAMENTALLY MAINTAINED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. FEW AMERICAN COUNTRIES HAVE TODAY A POSITION COMPARABLE TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WITH RESPECT TO THAT. THERE IS NOW GREAT RESPECT FOR THE CITIZEN. LIBERTY OF TRAVEL HAS BEEN EXPANDED TO COUNTRIES FOR WHICH A TRAVEL BAN, SIMILAR TO AND PROBABLY IN IMITATION OF THAT IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES IN FAIRLY RECENT YEARS, EXISTED. THE RETURN OF MANY DOMINICANS WHO WENT TO STUDY IN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES HAS BEEN EXPEDITED. AND EACH TIME A POLITICAL OR MILITARY AUTHORITY COMMITS AN ABUSE IN ANY DISTANT CORNER OF THE COUNTRY PROTESTS ECHO IN THE NEWSPAPERS. TO ALL THIS THE OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE RESPONDED WITH SERENITY, REAFFIRMING FREE POLITICAL DEBATE IN A CIVILIZED MANNER. ONE ASPECT STANDS OUT IN THIS CURRENT AUSPICIOUS STATE OF AFFAIRS: THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT BRAGGING ABOUT IT, IS NOT PROCLAIMING IT TO THE FOUR WINDS. RATHER IT SOMETIMES GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF ACCEPTING IT, OF PROMOTING IT RELUCTANTLY. DEFENDERS OF THE GOVERNMENT OFTEN SPEAK OF EXCESSES AND ABUSES OF LIBERTIES,

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OF LICENTIOUSNESS, IN SHORT. THIS ATTITUDE IS NOT COMPLETELY FOREIGN TO THE PRESENT OF THE REPUBLIC HIMSELF, WHO HAS ASSUMED BOLD POLICIES IN THE AREA OF POLITICAL AND PERSONAL RIGHTS, REMOVED BOTH JUSTIFIED AND UNJUSTIFIED PROHIBITIONS, EXERCISED FULLY HIS CONSTITUTIONAL PARDON POWERS, INTERVENING WITH THE ORGANS OF THE JUDICIAL POLICE WHEN THEY TOLERATE ABUSES OR ARE NEGLIGENT. IN THAT SENSE PRESIDENT BALAGUER HAS DONE MUCH

GOOD. BUT IT'S CURIOUS THAT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE PRIDES HIMSELF ON THE GREAT WORK OF PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE HE IS ACHIEVING-- AND WELL MAY HE PRIDE HIMSELF ON IT--YET NEVER BOASTS OF HIS CONTRIBUTION TO A NORMAL AND HEALTHY MUTUAL CO-EXISTENCE AMONG DOMINICANS. RATHER, HE IS INCLINED TO CRITICIZE THE EXERCISE OF LIBERTIES WHICH HE HAS GUARANTEED ASSIDUOUSLY AND IN AN EXEMPLARY MANNER, SUCH AS THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. THE COUNTRY HAS ENJOYED LIBERTIES WITH SHAKEUPS, SURPRISES, AND EVEN EXCESSES THROUGH THE RECENT YEARS. NOW THOSE LIBERTIES SEEM TO BE MAINTAINING THEMSELVES MORE WIDELY AND FIRMLY. AND IT SEEMS THAT NO ONE IN THE GOVERNMENT, EVEN THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF, IS CLAIMING FOR THE REGIME ITS CONTRIBUTION, SO SUBSTANTIAL, TO A SOCIAL CLIMATE OF FREE MUTUAL RESPECT NOR DEFINING IT AS A FIRM AND CREATIVE POLICY ORIENTED TOWARD THE FUTURE. THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC MERITS THAT FORGOTTEN HONOR IN THE PRESENCE OF ITSELF AND THE WORLD. END QUOTE.

2. COMMENT: LISTIN EDITORIAL, WHILE WELL-LACED WITH PRAISE FOR PRESIDENT BALAGUER, ALSO STRIKES A RESPONSIVE NOTE: THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC HAS COME A LONG DISTANCE IN RECENT YEARS IN IMPROVING HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS, BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN LESS THAN ENERGETIC IN BLOWING ITS OWN HORN IN THIS AREA.
AXELROD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, HUMAN RIGHTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
From: SANTO DOMINGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770645/aaaabnfg.tel
Line Count: 87
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Message ID: 99fafb7a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2111583
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ADDITIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMENT FROM LISTIN DIARIO
TAGS: SHUM, SOPN, DR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/99fafb7a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009